

Duffin busy in community activities

Continued from page 15

put on at the Opera House downtown, which was located on the west side of Adams Street.

She was the accompanist for the local Men's Chorus, and when she attended Pacific University in Forest Grove, Ore., she was the accompanist for the Women's Chorus there. She has played for "hundreds" of funerals and many, many weddings.

A special memory is the time she was accompanying soprano soloist Dorothy Egaas at the wedding of Velma Cushman to Walter Hunter in the neighboring Arthur Hunter home, when the bride fainted and was carried to an adjacent bedroom during the solo. "We went right on with music," Maysie recalls, "and soon the bride was back to complete the ceremony. That's the kind of event one remembers," she says, laughing.

Besides her piano and organ talent, she also sang. She was the alto member of a trio with Anna Mettler and Dorothy Egaas.

Following her college days, Duffin taught piano for two years, but found it was not for her. "I hated it" was her assessment. So she took a job in an electrical store that paid

\$18 a month. Later, she was hired as an assistant in the City Clerk's office and also helped in the Water Department. Eventually, another opening occurred and she was named City Treasurer, the position she held for 30 years. "I enjoyed my years at City Hall. It was a pleasant environment," she says. "Most of the men were interested in sports like I am and that was fun."

An avid sports fan and Trail Blazer booster, Duffin these days enjoys attending the soccer and baseball games of her young relatives, the children of her nieces and nephews. Swimming is a favorite activity which she has continued throughout her life.

Like friends her age, she learned to swim in the mill ditch, a block from her home. At that time, the ditch was not fenced and they swam there all summer. "We entertained ourselves," she remembers. "Every Saturday we went roller skating at the Opera House, and also went to silent movies there. It was a popular meeting place for the young people. We always walked downtown to the shows. We walked everywhere. Cars were only for long distances." High school graduations were always at the Opera House, too, in those days. "Mine was in 1922," she states.

One hot summer day she went fishing, a sport she really does not care about. But her friends were going, so she agreed to tag along although she had a cold. As she left the house, her mother admonished her to not get wet because of her cold. "So, of course, wouldn't you know, I fell in and got soaked! My friends had to dry my clothes before I could go home and face my mother," Duffin recounts. "She never did know, either!"

Life was not always ideal for Maysie, though. As a baby she contracted tuberculosis and the infection settled in her upper spine. For several years, she had to wear a brace to hold her head upright. That meant that she was not able to play like the other youngsters and often was seen sitting on the porch watching the others have a good time. Having the brace fitted in Portland required a trip there by steamboat, the usual method of traveling any distance from Camas at that time.

A trauma of her childhood was the loss of her father in the Columbia River when she was about nine years old. The family was part of a group from the church crossing the river on a barge to Lady Island for their annual summer Sunday School

picnic, as was the custom. But a boat rammed into them and as Mr. Duffin, a good swimmer, struggled to push it away, he tumbled into the water, and it is assumed, hit his head on the boat, because he was not seen again. Such a tragedy is not easily forgotten.

As the years passed, the Duffin children grew as the town grew. Leila, described by her sister as a "wonderfully nice" person, married Kent Chappell, and their daughter is Kay (Mrs. Ken) Powell of Camas. She has a brother, Alan Chappell, a doctor in Portland. Charles married Vera Harrington, a local girl, and they moved to California. Marjorie wed Harold Blake who founded Columbia River Truck Company. They had two children, Glenn "Skeeter" Blake and Betty Blake, now Mrs. Wally Matthews. Both children have built homes on the Columbia River next to the Blake family home near the Port Dock.

Charles, Leila and Marjorie, and their spouses are now deceased, but there are many grandchildren and great-grandchildren still in Camas. Others live farther away. But they know they have deep and lasting roots in Camas, a town incorporated in 1883 in Washington Territory, which advanced to statehood in 1889.